

Elizabeth

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and the experiences we have had will remain to cheer and refresh us.

These Children Are Happy

BEFORE we turn to other topics, I want to tell you how I found a happy crowd of youngsters from the Shepherd-street Mission, Preston, enjoying themselves on holiday in St. Annes. Shepherd-street must seem strangely quiet this week, for Mr. and Mrs. Slater, the superintendent and matron, and their big family of boys and girls have packed up and left the mission for Sandy Knoll, a spacious and pleasant house facing an open heath and near to the sea.

Thanks to the generosity of Mr. Fletcher, of Park-road, Blackpool, the children are able to spend a full month at Sandy Knoll, for Mr. Fletcher allows them the house free of all charge.

When I went in one night last week it was raining steadily, but spirits were undamped, and before I got to the front door I heard the cheery sound of community singing. Snatches from the latest jazz, a few lines from folk tunes and an odd verse of old war songs.

The singers were the boys, and, nothing daunted, they continued to sing as I stood smiling in the doorway.

Despite the lack of sunshine of the first few days of their holiday, bright eyes and glowing cheeks spoke of hours in the fresh air, and I think Mrs. Slater and Cook could testify to the good effect St. Annes air was having on appetites!

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In another room the girls sat reading, changing records on a gramophone and playing games. I suspect that it was only by chance that they were the quieter, for gleams of mischief shone unmistakably in their eyes.

Upstairs, the younger ones were already tucked in bed. I wish you could have seen them as I did. Beds on holiday are often delightfully "unconventional" for children, but these youngsters were unworried by their "shakedown."

Except for odd ones, all were fast asleep, and judging from the mischievous smiles playing round their mouths I should imagine they were dreaming of the next day's joys.

I hope Mr. Fletcher finds time to visit Sandy Knoll while the children are there, for I am certain that a few minutes spent with them will amply repay him for his generosity and goodwill. To make holidays by the sea possible for those who would otherwise have to stay in towns seems to me a privilege.

Since that night when I watched the children from Shepherd-street, I have found myself looking at the little white faces of toddlers in our poorer streets and wishing that they might have the benefits of real holidays.

Well Done, Preston!